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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE AND EAP/K

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [MNUC](#) [KN](#) [KS](#) [CH](#) [JA](#) [RS](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: DPRK: FRANCE CONSIDERS ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE
(UNDEFINED) IN PYONGYANG

REF: A. PARIS 1379
[1](#)B. PARIS 1389 PARIS 1558 12/14/09 YOUNG-EAP/K-DPRK
EMAIL

Classified By: Ambassador Charles Rivkin
for reasons 1.4, (b). and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) The Government of France may establish an office in Pyongyang, based on a recommendation by Special Presidential Envoy for North Korea Jack Lang who briefed the Ambassadors from the U.S., China, South Korea, Japan and Russia (the Five Parties) on December 14. Accompanied by members of President Sarkozy's staff (Bertrand Lortholary), FM Kouchner's Cabinet (Emmanuelle Pavillon) and MFA Asia Directorate (PDAS Thierry Viteau), Lang thanked the governments of the Five Party partners for informative briefings prior to his mission and underscored that France would act in consultation with these partners in dealing with North Korea. Noting that he had already submitted a written report and spoken with President Sarkozy, Lang outlined what he called the unique situation of France as the only EU country (sic) that has not completed the bilateral recognition of North Korea. (Comment: We believe not all the Baltic countries have recognized the DPRK). He added French tradition was to recognize countries and not governments and for various historical reasons (NFI) bilateral recognition had not been completed with North Korea. Lang said he had made the proposal to establish an office in Pyongyang this same day (December 14) to DPRK representatives from Pyongyang and the DPRK mission to UNESCO, which are also accredited to the French Republic. The North Korean delegation did not provide an immediate reaction to the proposal, he said.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) The proposed office would concern itself with promoting culture, educational exchanges, economic development, health and agricultural cooperation and support French NGOs that are currently operating in North Korea, Lang said. President Sarkozy's Advisor for Asia Lortholary noted that opening an office would enable the government of France to stay better informed of developments in North Korea, would enhance the number of exchanges to permit North Korean people and elites to have a better understanding of the outside world, and enable France to help address the enormous needs of rank and file North Koreans that is a product of

underdevelopment. While this idea had been under consideration by the French for some time, the French delayed mention of this proposal until after Ambassador Bosworth completed his mission and the French had a chance to interpret the results, including favorable reviews from Ambassador Bosworth at press conferences and comments by Secretary Clinton. Lang described France's goal as "seeking to contribute in our own way to promote peace in the region" in support of the Six-Party Talks process. Lang and Lortholary hoped the other members the Five Parties would react favorably to this French proposal. Russian Ambassador Orlov said he could react positively to the proposal. The U.S. asked whether the French believe Pyongyang will interpret this offer as a concession as it presupposes bilateral recognition and thereby reduces the value of that eventual step. Both Lang and Lortholary replied that France considered opening this new office as a way to reaffirm the conditionality of eventual bilateral recognition.

¶3. (C/NF) Comment and Action Request: Lang will brief the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly on December 16 on his recommendation to open a bilateral office in Pyongyang. Post welcomes the Department's reaction to this French proposal. As reported previously, bilateral recognition is the prerogative of the President on the recommendation of the Foreign Minister. While Lang has no power to implement this proposal, he has clearly briefed the President whose office appears to be favorably disposed. Our consultations

with Chinese, Japanese and South Korean Ambassadors reveal a common understanding that Jack Lang has no particular expertise to enable him to engage extensively with Pyongyang. His previous foray as Envoy to Cuba had no measureable policy impact. Nevertheless, with the Presidency NSC staff (Lortholary) chiming in positively to Lang's proposal, it would seem that Sarkozy already may have agreed to this step of opening an office. If Washington believes we should work to turn off the project to open a French office in Pyongyang, we recommend expressing our view as early as practicable.

¶4. (U) This cable was delayed in transmission due to technical issues.
RIVKIN